United Nations A/66/214–S/2011/476

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
1 August 2011

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-sixth session
Item 63 (b) of the provisional agenda*
New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support: causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 65/278, which was adopted following the consideration by the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session of the report of the Secretary-General dated 20 July 2010 (A/65/152-S/2010/526) containing a review of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318).

The report provides an assessment of major developments on the continent during the past year and examines the implementation by the United Nations system of key priority areas identified in the review report. In keeping with the mandate of resolution 65/278 to develop policy proposals on emerging challenges, the report provides an in-depth analysis of two of the most pressing issues in Africa, namely, "youth, education and employment" and "conflict and natural resources" and proposes concrete and practical recommendations.

* A/66/150.

11-43937 (E) 170811

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. In response to a request from the Security Council, in 1998 my predecessor undertook a comprehensive analysis of the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The then Secretary-General issued a report proposing a set of realistic and achievable measures to significantly reduce political tensions and violence within and between African States, build durable peace and promote socio-economic and political development (A/52/871-S/1998/318).

2. In its resolution 63/304, the General Assembly requested me to submit a report on the outcome of the review of the recommendations contained in the original report as well as of the commitments made, the actions taken, the progress achieved and the lessons learned since 1998. As a result of broad-based consultations with Member States, the African Union and African regional economic communities, civil society organizations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system through the Inter-Agency Task Force on Africa coordinated by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, I issued a review report setting out recommendations and proposals for a renewed United Nations engagement with Africa (A/65/152-S/2010/526).

II. A year in review

3. In my review report, I stressed the need to change the discourse around Africa, focusing on opportunities and acknowledging the existence of different realities on the continent. Today the world looks at Africa in a different light, one of hope and admiration for the progress that it is making.

4. Although the effects of the global crises are still felt, last year Africa experienced strong economic growth and improvement in social development indicators, especially in health and education. The peaceful independence referendum in Southern Sudan in January 2011, the success of the Fédération internationale de football association (FIFA) World Cup in South Africa, the adoption of a new constitution in Kenya, the transition of Guinea and Niger from military to democratic civilian rule, and the people-driven changes in Egypt and Tunisia are contributing to a change in old perceptions about the continent. The increased engagement of emerging economies on the continent and Africa's rapid transformations are swiftly changing the policy space in which African leaders operate. In fact, Africa has come to epitomize the steady shift that is taking place globally at the political and economic levels and that is forcing us to rethink many of the ways in which we operate.

5. In spite of this progress, some parts of Africa continue to endure armed conflict, fragility, erosion of the rule of law and chronic poverty, with women and children bearing the brunt of those challenges. The increased threat of violent demonstrations and terrorist attacks as well as unresolved issues around electoral processes and unmanaged diversity continue to pose a strategic challenge for Africa and for its partners within the international community. Human rights continue to be violated with civilians purposely being killed, maimed, sexually assaulted and exploited during conflict, with especially grave impact on women and children.

6. Some of the revolts in North Africa, and most recently in sub-Saharan Africa, have resulted in sustained violence and in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya erupted into broad violence, with more than 650,000 leaving the country since the start of the conflict. The Security Council, by its resolution 1970 (2011), decided to refer the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the International Criminal Court and to impose an arms embargo on the country and a travel ban and assets freeze on certain Government officials. Unconstitutional changes of power and post-electoral violence remain a major concern. In Côte d'Ivoire, a political stalemate was eventually resolved when President Ouattara was formally sworn in by the constitutional authorities on 6 May 2011.

7. In spite of the successful independence referendum, Africa's newest nation faces the threat of instability due to ongoing violence. Since January, clashes between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and rebel forces in Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity State, resulted in hundreds killed and thousands displaced. Reports of ongoing recruitment by rebel leadership and reports of SPLA troop increases in those areas will pose security and political challenges in the months to come. In June 2011, SPLA clashed with Northern troops in Abyei, with over 100,000 people fleeing the fighting. In response, on 27 June, the Security Council adopted resolution 1990 (2011) establishing the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). In neighbouring Southern Kordofan State, fighting that began on 5 June continues to cause the deaths of many civilians and the displacement of tens of thousands and has put United Nations staff directly at risk. With the assistance of mediators from the African Union, on 28 June 2011 in Addis Ababa, the Government of the Sudan and SPLM signed a Framework Agreement on Political and Security Arrangements in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan States. On 8 July, by its resolution 1996 (2011) the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) to assist the new State of South Sudan to consolidate the peace in the country. As of June 2011, the United Nations and Partners Work Plan for Sudan was million funded in the amount of $731 million, 43 per cent of the $1.7 billion sought.

8. The International Maritime Bureau reported a growing number of violent pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia in 2010, with 49 vessels hijacked and 1,016 crew members taken hostage. Somali pirates are allegedly active further into the Indian Ocean. Inside Somalia, the long-standing conflict continues to pose a threat to the stability of the region. About 1.9 million Somalis are internally displaced, and 2.4 million people, one in three Somalis, are in need of humanitarian assistance. On 9 June 2011, the Security Council welcomed the signing of the Kampala Accord.

9. According to the 2011 African Economic Outlook, Africa's economies have weathered the global crisis, rebounding to an average 4.7 per cent growth in 2010, up from 2.3 per cent in 2009, with sub-Saharan Africa growing faster than North Africa. Owing to skyrocketing food and fuel prices in 2011, however, the number of people in Africa living in extreme poverty has actually increased. The high rates of unemployment and the limited access to energy continue to constrain the continent's ability to create wealth and jobs.

10. The 2010 summit on the Millennium Development Goals called for the international community to honour its aid commitments to Africa. Overall, net disbursements of official development assistance increased from $29.9 billion in

2004 to $48 billion in 2010, while net disbursements by Development Assistance Committee countries increased from $19.4 billion to $29.3 billion.

11. New funding and investment in Africa by Brazil, China, India or Turkey are fundamentally altering the continent's economic relationships with the rest of the world. Trade between Africa and the emerging economic powers has grown significantly over the past few years. African governments and institutions have clearly defined infrastructure development as among their top priorities in order to reap the benefits of their enhanced relations with emerging economies. Following the priorities of the African Union/New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a strong focus is being placed on helping small farmers, many of whom are women, and providing support to small and medium-sized enterprises that generate jobs and provide access to basic services and safety nets for families vulnerable to economic shocks.

12. The remittances of Africans in the diaspora, which currently run at approximately $40 billion a year, which in some instances exceeds official development assistance, are having a major impact upon lives in many African countries. It is necessary, however, to lower the transaction costs of remittances and create opportunities for development-oriented investment. Despite the downturn in the global economy, growth of remittance flows to Africa over 2010-2011 is estimated at 4.5 per cent. However, that percentage is far lower than it was before the global crisis. Unfortunately, the current upheaval in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has resulted in large numbers of migrants from the Sahel returning to their countries of origin.

13. This year we celebrate the tenth anniversary of NEPAD, Africa's own blueprint for the region's socio-economic advancement. This occasion provides an opportunity to reflect on the many achievements of the programme and to renew our commitment to support Africa's own efforts to promote its growth, its development and its participation in the global economy.

An enhanced focus on the interlinkages between peace and development

14. In my review report, I noted that many of today's conflicts would often be within States and would likely be triggered by the systematic exclusion of significant portions of society from institutions of political governance and from access to key economic assets and social services. Countries facing stark inequality, weak and unrepresentative institutions, and lacking decent jobs, opportunities and freedoms, particularly for a large youth population, are at an increased risk of instability.

15. Although we understand better the socio-economic dynamics of armed violence and its negative impact on development, in most instances we fail to programme accordingly or to appropriately account for this relation. It is critical that we refocus current development strategies to establish, together with the Millennium Development Goals, a more robust and gender responsive social, political and economic agenda and stronger institutional frameworks to address the interconnected peace and development challenges. A number of United Nations entities have developed indicators and benchmarks on a range of issues related to peace consolidation, including on the protection of civilians and the empowerment of women. Such tools help United Nations operations highlight the means required to support continued implementation of their tasks. I will engage the Inter-Agency

Task Force on Africa to develop measurable indicators and examine the progress achieved in the recommendations I set out in my review report in order to acquire a better understanding of the correlation between peace and development and of the areas that need urgent attention.

III. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the review report

16. My review report outlined a series of recommendations to address some of the key issues that are likely to dominate the African agenda and will therefore require focused attention. This section provides an outline of the implementation by the United Nations system of key priority areas identified in my review report.

A. Institutional cooperation

17. The United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) streamlines the peace and security presence of the United Nations in Addis Ababa, strengthens African Union-United Nations coordination and the capacity of the Organization to support the operational and capacity-building efforts of the African Union for peace operations. On 2 February 2011, I issued a report reviewing the 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union (A/65/716-S/2011/54), in which I called for better cooperation and a common strategic vision on both sides towards meeting the objectives of the programme. The Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa has recommended that the implementation of the programme be accelerated through a comprehensive work programme among the regional coordination mechanism clusters and the African Union organs. Effective political cooperation requires better analytical capacity, strategic planning and coordination between both organizations, including more efforts in public information and advocacy. The regional coordination mechanism advocacy and communications cluster, convened by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, is in the process of establishing a strategic framework on communications with the African Union in this regard.

18. Cooperation between the regional economic communities and the Secretariat is also being strengthened, with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa instituting regular briefings to exchange information with the regional economic communities and departments and offices, such as the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and providing technical advice to several regional communities for the formulation of common positions on the arms trade treaty. UNOAU will also be working to strengthen cooperation and coordination among the United Nations, the African Union and the regional economic communities. The Department of Political Affairs and the Southern African Development Community signed a new cooperation agreement in September 2010.

B. Conflict prevention, peacekeeping and conflict management

19. Additional steps have been taken to outline conflict prevention activities within a coherent strategic framework, including the launching of the United Nations-African Union mediation partnership guidelines at the third Joint Task Force on Peace and Security in September 2011. The United Nations Regional

Office for Central Africa was established in 2010 to focus on preventive diplomacy and work with Central African governments and organizations. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, together with other departments and offices, such as the Office for Disarmament Affairs, support the African Union Commission in developing an African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform aimed at providing a framework for African Union member States, the regional economic communities and their partners to formulate, review and implement effective and accountable security sector reform. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has developed a multi-year support programme with the African Union Commission to help build capacities to implement this policy.

20. In March 2011, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations signed a joint plan of action to further strengthen their cooperation against organized crime and illicit trafficking in conflict and post-conflict countries, including in Guinea-Bissau. The success of peacekeeping and stabilization forces would greatly benefit, in certain situations, from having a mandate related to the fight against drug trafficking. The United Nations stands ready to support States hosting peace operations to develop their capacity to counter organized crime and illicit trafficking, as appropriate.

21. The integrated mission planning process and the integrated strategic framework (see A/65/669) are mechanisms designed to help coordinate United Nations activities and to ensure that efforts to address the root causes of conflict continue without interruption after the departure of a peacekeeping operation as well as to ensure a smooth transition to peacebuilding. Public perceptions about the work of the United Nations and its partners are critical in ensuring successful implementation of mandates and transition to long-term stabilization efforts. The pioneering transitions of United Nations peacekeeping radio stations to post-war public broadcasting stations in Sierra Leone and the Central African Republic serve as examples of service that is oriented towards gradual transition for United Nations-sponsored programmes in post-peacekeeping environments.

C. Post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery

22. The Peacebuilding Commission is implementing the recommendations contained in the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture (see A/64/868-S/2010/393, annex) on how to attain greater clarity on principles, processes and actions. On 25 January 2011, the Organizational Committee adopted a provisional Road map for actions in 2011 to ensure appropriate focus on a limited set of priority tasks aimed at enhancing its impact in the countries on its agenda. On 23 February 2011, the Peacebuilding Commission decided to place Guinea on its agenda, acting for the first time without a referral from the Security Council but instead in response to a request from Guinea itself.

23. The issues of countering illicit trafficking and organized crime have been included in the work of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone as part of the joint West Africa Coast Initiative, which targets post-conflict countries and contributes to peacebuilding initiatives and security sector reforms. A partnership to address security threats in Central Africa will be jointly implemented with the Department of Political Affairs in 2011.

24. In my report on women's participation in peacebuilding (A/65/354-S/2010/466), I set out a seven-point action plan to ensure that a greater proportion of peacebuilding funds support women's empowerment and gender equality as part of a broader effort to engage women in conflict prevention and social reconstruction. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Peacebuilding Support Office will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on the progress of the Organization in the implementation of the plan. The Peacebuilding Fund has committed to doubling its expenditure on peacebuilding, women's empowerment and gender equality by 2012.

D. Sustained economic growth and sustainable development

25. Through its resolution A/65/280, the General Assembly endorsed the Istanbul Declaration[1] and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020[2] adopted by the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which has a strong focus on building productive capacity, and called upon all relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Programme of Action. The programme is of special interest for Africa, which has 33 out of the current 48 least developed countries, as it also covers the link between armed conflict and development.

26. Ensuring food security and promoting rural development remain major components of United Nations policy for economic growth. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) focus on post-conflict rehabilitation through agricultural development and invest in post-harvest technologies to reduce the $4 billion a year in food losses and boost the continent's food security. According to FAO, closing the gender gap in agriculture would generate significant gains that could reduce the number of hungry people by 12 to 17 per cent. Support for the NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, which includes the creation of safety nets for the hungry poor and direct interventions to improve nutrition, remains critical.

27. Information and communications technologies have demonstrated their power in promoting economic and social change. Africa is the fastest growing region in the use of mobile phones. It is necessary, however, to ensure that those tools serve the cause of peace and development and that the United Nations matches twenty-first century innovation with the right partnerships in order to successfully address today's challenges. For instance, I have made innovation a priority of the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health.

E. Human rights

28. We have taken significant steps towards establishing a more comprehensive monitoring and accountability architecture to tackle the vicious cycle of impunity for wartime sexual violence, with Security Council resolution 1960 (2010) calling

[1] A/CONF.219/L.1.
[2] A/CONF.219/3 and Rev.1.

for perpetrators to be publicly listed and punished with sanctions. My Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, whose office is now fully operational, has completed a number of missions to shed light on allegations of widespread and systematic rape. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has taken innovative approaches and put in place mechanisms to help protect civilians in the country, including women and children. The United Nations system and, through it, UN-Women, remains committed to further assisting Member States in implementing gender equality policies and promoting the equitable representation and effective participation of women in all areas of peace, security and development.

29. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in cooperation with other departments and offices, such as the Office for Disarmament Affairs, has provided capacity-building training to defence/security forces on the protection of human rights and accountability for their violation, in particular during election periods.

IV. Emerging challenges

30. In its resolution 65/278, the General Assembly requested me to develop, in consultation with relevant partners, policy proposals on issues identified in my review report. In so doing, it has become clear that as a system we need to better integrate the different policy frameworks in which we engage with Africa. In today's resource-constrained environment, imaginative ideas to ensure synergies and prioritization will be necessary, including the leadership and commitment of the General Assembly and the Security Council in guiding the United Nations system and in establishing appropriate policy spaces to engage with the United Nations and other partners. **I call on the General Assembly and the Security Council, through its Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, to further engage with the United Nations system in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the present report and to provide guidelines on the most pressing and emerging issues.**

31. In the light of the implications for the political and economic development and stability in Africa, this section provides an in-depth analysis and proposes practical recommendations to address two of the most pressing issues on the continent, namely, "youth, education and employment" and "conflict and natural resources".

A. Youth, education and employment

32. Adequate access to quality education and to decent employment is a vital component for poverty reduction, political stability, peace, security and sustainable development. This complex issue requires coordinated and innovative responses that address both the socio-economic dimension of youth education and unemployment as well as the consequences of the exclusion of youth from political participation.

33. In my review report, I called on the United Nations to mainstream and operationalize policies and programmes aimed at empowering youth and creating the necessary conditions to enable them to fully participate in all aspects of society. I also highlighted the need to ensure the appropriate inclusion of youth-related

policies in post-conflict peacebuilding strategies and to step up the implementation of the Ouagadougou Plan of Action for promotion of employment and poverty alleviation.

34. According to the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, 60 per cent of Africa's approximate population of 1 billion is under the age of 25. With the increasing youth bulge, much greater emphasis needs to be placed upon the urgent need to provide them with quality education, skills and decent jobs as well as adequate spaces for effective political and social participation and representation. One of the main drivers of the current discontent in some parts of Northern Africa is, in large measure, the result of years of economic mismanagement, inadequate social investment and the lack of political participation and decent job opportunities for young people.

35. These movements are as much about jobs as they are about justice, equity and democracy. They are creating conditions that could either generate more social, political and economic opportunities or make the aspirations of youth even more difficult to achieve. The outcome will depend, to a great extent, on our success in responding to those expectations. In assisting communities to tackle the root causes of discontent, we must be better aware of their historical, social and political context and ensure that programmes appropriately incorporate local concerns and sensitivities.

36. We must be conscious at all times of the enormous contribution that young people can make to the development of their societies. If we do not recognize and utilize youth assets, the generational cycle of instability, underdevelopment and inequity will continue. The United Nations, through the proclamation of 2010 as the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, and the African Union, which, at the Summit held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 23 June to 1 July 2011, held a debate on "accelerating youth empowerment for sustainable development", have acknowledged that there are today fewer issues more pressing than positively and urgently responding to the aspirations and dreams of the young people.

1. Education

37. The average net primary school enrolment rate is about 76 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa and 94 per cent in North Africa. The majority of African countries are on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015. In general, progress in enrolment rates has been achieved through the abolition of school fees, greater public investments and improved donor support.

38. There is, however, less success in other areas, mainly in the quality of education, completion rates, enrolment in secondary and tertiary education, basic education reform, teacher recruitment and technical and vocational training. Each year, over 10 million pupils in sub-Saharan Africa drop out of school, and millions of children leave school without basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Of the 71 million adolescents who are not in school, more than 50 per cent are in sub-Saharan Africa, and more than 30 million African children remain totally excluded from education owing to financial, social, cultural or physical barriers. In many communities, cultural beliefs and practices have a disproportionate adverse impact on female participation in education, and many national policies do not

address the issue of girls' right to education. In addition to young women, young persons who have disabilities or are refugees or migrant workers are often excluded from the educational system.

39. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010: Reaching the marginalized* (Paris, 2010), the average annual financing gap in education for 2008-2015 is about 65 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, and the pupil-to-teacher ratio reached 68:1 in Chad and 65:1 in Ethiopia. At those rates, Africa will need 1.2 million new teachers up to 2015. Low teacher remuneration, the number of teachers unable to work due to HIV/AIDS and other diseases, the difficulties in reaching the most vulnerable children and youth in urban informal settlements or in remote areas, and the lack of school supplies contribute to the low levels of academic achievement.

40. In spite of the growing engagement of international donors and collaborative initiatives, the numbers of young people with higher education degrees remains extremely low. Across the continent, the enrolment rate at such institutions is 6 per cent, with female participation distressingly low; approximately 40 per cent of faculty positions at higher education institutions remain vacant.

2. Employment

41. Education has contributed to narrowing the gender inequality gap and increasing literacy levels in Africa, although it has had little impact on unemployment rates. Youth with higher levels of education experience higher rates of unemployment, whereas unemployment among the lesser skilled is lower because of their need to work to survive. The International Labour Organization (ILO) indicates that approximately 90 per cent of the jobs created in Africa are in the informal economy and that 152 million young workers, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa, live in poor households with a per capita expenditure below $1.25 a day. Young Africans, irrespective of their level of education, struggle to find decent employment.

42. In sub-Saharan Africa, young people aged 15 to 24 make up 36 per cent of the workforce. According to the World Bank, 10 million young graduates come onto the job market every year. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) indicates that most of the 4.9 million graduates in 2009, a figure that will almost double to 9.6 million by 2020, obtained their degrees in the social sciences, business and law, while the fields of engineering, manufacturing, construction and health recorded the lowest percentage of tertiary graduates. There is mismatch between education and the labour market is increasing. Saturated public services; a private sector that is small and unable to employ large numbers of people; labour demand barriers; information gaps between job seekers and potential employers; and barriers to the creation and development of business opportunities contribute to high unemployment rates.

43. The current joblessness situation in Africa is significant given the recent high economic growth rate of nearly 6 per cent annually, though there are considerable differences among regions. ILO data shows a persistent rate of 12 per cent unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa for the past decade, albeit with enormous disparities, from 55.8 per cent in South Africa to 10.9 per cent in Namibia. In Sierra Leone, youth unemployment is 52.5 per cent against the national average of 10.2 per

cent. The current and ongoing uprisings in North Africa have been attributed partly to youth unemployment, which stands at 31 per cent and 34 per cent in Tunisia and Egypt, respectively.

44. Unemployment figures do not hint to the real challenge. They do not capture other dimensions, such as underemployment and the working poor, which are prevalent in subsistence agriculture and the urban informal sector and affect mostly women, who tend to be congregated into low skilled, low paying, low entry and low exit sectors. Urban unemployment is higher than in rural areas, and young women and young persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected because of social issues and discrimination at the workplace.

45. The economic, social and political costs of non-educated and unemployed youth are extraordinarily high. Without opportunities to earn a living, intergenerational cycles of poverty will persist. Joblessness may fuel young people to engage in crime and violence. With no social protection, many young people, including graduates, survive by taking up activities in the informal economy or migrating to urban areas or to other countries. Although any type of unmanaged migration may create competition for resources and jobs in destination areas, the positive effects of migration, such as financial and social remittances, must be enhanced in order to reap development potential.

46. The private sector in Africa has a central role to play in addressing youth unemployment. There are also significant employment gains to be made if the entrepreneurial potential of women is unleashed towards growth opportunities rather than the informal economy and low-yield, saturated sectors. Now is the time to carefully consider job-generating fiscal, monetary, trade and industrial policies with more local methods of employment creation that respond to local and community aspirations and contribute to the maintenance of social peace and locally based economic development.

3. United Nations and African initiatives

47. In recent decades, a number of global and regional initiatives spurred by the United Nations, the African Union and African governments have pushed the youth development agenda forward, including: the 1995 World Programme of Action for Youth; the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All; the African Union's Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015); the African Youth Charter and the prioritization of youth development during the Youth Decade (2009-2018); and the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). The African Union Youth Volunteers Corps was launched in December 2010 with 67 members from across Africa as a continental development programme that recruits and works with youth volunteers, to work in all 53 countries in Africa.

48. African governments have made concerted efforts at the national and subregional levels, including the adoption of sector-wide approaches, the initiation of projects on literacy for development and the abolition of primary school fees in almost all countries. In Somalia, the development of an interim Decent Work country programme focuses on the underlying causes of conflict, such as resource control and employment and economic issues, and addresses key elements in a concerted manner with all relevant stakeholders. Similar inclusive social dialogue forums have worked well in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi.

49. In December 2009, the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/134 proclaiming the year commencing 12 August 2010 as the International Year of Youth under the theme "Dialogue and mutual understanding". A high-level meeting on youth was held on 25 and 26 July 2011 in New York. The International Year marked an important step in the international community's initiatives to focus on the role of youth and to strengthen their voice in global affairs. During its 17th Ordinary Session, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in June 2011, the African Union decided to elaborate a technical and vocational education and training framework, specifically addressing the domains of agriculture and information and communications technology, while accelerating the implementation of the Youth Decade Plan of Action. The Economic and Social Council held a high-level segment from 4 to 29 July 2011 and adopted a ministerial declaration calling for more effective international cooperation to achieve the Education for All goals: quality of education, early childhood care and education, skills development and adult literacy.

4. Policy proposals and recommendations

50. Africa's population is growing rapidly. It is expected that by 2050 Africa will account for 29 per cent of the world's population aged 15 to 24. This transition will continue to have serious fiscal, political and social implications, ranging from increased education and health costs, to risks of social unrest and migration pressures.

51. The strategy for tackling youth employment requires an integrated approach that addresses labour demand and supply as well as the quantity and quality of employment; promotes the creation of social protection mechanisms for youth; ensures social dialogue for improved employment rights; provides basic minimum wages; and improves productivity as well as labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work. Pro-growth policies should also increase equity in the distribution of social and political opportunities and income, with special attention focused on vulnerable and traditionally disadvantaged groups, especially women and young people, and consider the opportunities and challenges that regional integration and globalization bring to the development of young people.

52. The definition and framing of plans of action and programmes targeting youth as agents of building peace and economic development remains weak. Youth has been largely excluded from the agenda of international peace and development efforts, and adolescents, during or after wars, seldom receive any special attention or psychological assistance in addressing issues related to disrupted patterns of social integration and formation of personal identity. The United Nations and its African partners must work to find the appropriate mechanisms for engaging youth in peacebuilding and development as well as identify the content of that engagement.

53. It is necessary for all stakeholders to attain a better understanding of the extent of the problem and of the immense potential that youth represents and to strengthen the crucial link between employment and peacebuilding. In close cooperation with governments, the African Union, donors and civil society, the United Nations has an important role to play in providing responses to the plight of Africa's young population.

54. **I call on the General Assembly, the Security Council and the United Nations system to deepen their engagement with youth and facilitate their**

participation in decision-making processes through formal and informal consultations in order to identify and aim at removing sources of social, political and economic discontent among young people. United Nations entities should enhance their coordination and efforts towards a more comprehensive and integrated approach to youth development.

55. **I will consider ways to ensure that social and psychological support to youth groups affected by conflict is included, when necessary, in peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development mandates and that adequate assistance is provided to the Ministries of Health. Education or Social Affairs and the Ministries of Employment and to community-based support systems for youth and adolescents in conflict areas.**

56. **I reiterate my call to the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa to mainstream the issue of youth into all clusters and to support sectoral priorities, as identified by NEPAD, capable of securing investments and facilitating the creation of jobs for young people, namely, improvement of infrastructure, development of new information and communications technologies, investment in small farming and small and medium-sized enterprises, and ensuring that health epidemics are brought under control.**

57. **United Nations country teams and presences in post-conflict countries can assist in engaging with young people and prioritizing quality and innovative education (formal and non-formal), such as internships, volunteerism and e-learning, entrepreneurial learning, enterprise training and facilitation of the involvement of youth diaspora as well as on the transition to green economy based on green jobs and renewable energy, especially for women. This could be achieved by partnering with the Global Compact, private businesses and other entities.**

B. Conflict and natural resources

58. The General Assembly has underlined on several occasions the need to address the negative implications of the illegal exploitation of natural resources in all its aspects as a way to promote peace, security and development in Africa, and has condemned the illicit trade in natural resources that fuels armed conflict.

59. In my review report (A/65/152-S/2010/526), I called on the United Nations system to systematically take into account the role of natural resources (including access to land and secure tenure rights to land, water, biodiversity and raw materials, as well as the distribution of proceeds from the exploitation of natural resources) in every evaluation of the political conflicts in Africa.

60. Conflict over natural resources has made Africa the focus of international attention, particularly during the past decade. In spite of the continent's richness in minerals and arable lands, many Africans do not benefit from this wealth. The complex interplay between politics and economics at the national and international levels surrounding the ownership, management and control of natural resources have disrupted communities, fuelled armed conflicts, increased corruption and opened the doors for external intervention in several areas of the continent. Some of the conflicts have become regional and have the potential to have a global impact on the supply of natural resources.

61. In some instances, countries have experienced the so-called "resource curse", as mineral and fuel abundance has generated negative developmental outcomes, including poor economic performance, growth collapses, high levels of corruption, displacement, environmental degradation, serious human rights violations, ineffective governance and erosion of State authority and greater political violence.

62. A number of complex issues arise in this context. These include struggles for land and natural resources fuelling instability and insecurity, significant amounts of pressure for patronage, corruption and conflict among contending groups at the national and international levels and inequalities in the distribution of benefits and revenues, especially to the elite. Some foreign-based companies and sovereign wealth funds have been accused of seeking to exploit Africa's resources in ways adverse to the long-term interests of local populations, thereby promoting the growth of local corrupt elites who, in turn, obstruct the emergence of responsive and accountable states.

63. The extractive industries and the management of land, forests and water and energy security are critical areas that merit further attention.

1. Extractive industries

64. Extractive industries in Africa tend to be export-oriented. Control over the exploitation of and the benefits derived from mineral wealth, such as gold, diamonds and other gemstones, coltan, uranium and timber, have been important factors in the resource wars in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone, where the increasing involvement of criminal networks and foreign and national armed groups in economic activities, notably mining, have contributed significantly to insecurity and violence.

65. Revenue transparency is a critical part of the governance package for nations to reap benefits from exploitation of their natural resources. Although it is slow, progress in achieving transparency in the extractive industries is happening. In September 2010, President Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo announced a ban on mining activity in certain areas in order to facilitate the removal of illegal armed groups from mines, where army units have been largely replaced by mining police. The measure was aimed at ending the involvement in mining of criminal networks within the ranks of the police and enable the registration of all those participating in the sector. The ban was lifted in March.

66. On 19 May 2011, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development adopted a voluntary joint framework for due diligence on conflict-free supply chains, and on 27 May 2011, the Group of Eight endorsed for the first time mandatory disclosure of extractive industry payments to governments to set in place transparency laws and regulations and to promote voluntary standards that require or encourage oil, gas and mining companies to disclose the payments they make to governments.

2. Land and forests

67. Among the 22 countries across the globe considered to be in protracted food crises, 17 are in Africa. Ecosystem degradation, desertification, soil erosion and intensified drought are factors that connect climate change to conflict over land. Conflicts over resources in semi-arid areas, often between pastoralists and farmers,

will become a growing concern. As the availability of natural resources in non-protected areas dwindles, the protected areas become a focus for poaching, illegal grazing and other human activities, affecting the sustainability of those areas and often increasing the illegal transportation of natural resources across borders, which is often linked to national and/or regional conflicts.

68. The combination of the importance of land rights and tenure systems in determining political and social hierarchies means that Africa's lands are often a matter of intense contestation. Most of the recent conflicts over land are local, have been going on for generations, often feed on pre-existing historical differences between neighbours and are traditionally dealt with at the local level. Indigenous capacities in relation to remedies to climate change issues over land need to be further explored.

69. Land reform, and especially access to it, is a highly sensitive issue throughout Africa. Large-scale acquisition of land by foreigners for industrial agriculture or biofuels has become controversial, and it is seen by some as a threat to the food supply, sovereignty and survival of small-scale farmers. A very small proportion of land is owned or controlled by women. This has negative consequences for the capacity of communities to recover from conflict and re-establish food security, especially when, after conflict, female-headed households are not permitted to reassert control over the land of absent males.

70. Africa is home to the second largest tropical rainforest in the world and to a variety of dry forests. Forests play essential ecological, social and economic roles, and the problems affecting them intersect with issues related to land, food security, water and energy security, fuelwood being one of the main contributions of forests to poverty alleviation. Forests have played a role in fuelling conflict, such as in Liberia, where the term "conflict timber" was coined. They can also stimulate economic growth. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a concessionary and taxation system has been established to ensure equitable benefit-sharing among all relevant stakeholders, including local populations and the State, both at the local and national levels.

3. Water

71. The management of conflicts over water is one of the biggest challenges in the effort to achieve effective global environmental governance. Whereas water is potentially a conflict issue, most major differences over water resources have been resolved through cooperation and negotiation. The UNESCO programme "From potential conflict to cooperation potential: water for peace", for instance, helps promote cooperation and development related to the management of transboundary water resources.

72. Africa has 80 transboundary rivers and lake water basins, including 38 groundwater aquifer basins shared by more than one country. Concerns over the availability of water in the semi-arid region of southern Africa continue as well as those in the Senegal River Basin and the Nile River Basin in the light of the growing populations of the riparian States and an ever-increasing need for energy and water, aggravated by the impact of climate change.

73. Approximately 40 per cent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa still lacks access to safe drinking water, and 69 per cent does not have access to adequate

sanitation facilities. The situation in rural areas is worse, with 53 per cent and 76 per cent of the population not having access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, respectively. The number of people in Africa experiencing water scarcity may increase by 75 million by 2020, and several hundred million by 2050. The underdevelopment of water resources and services as well as its poor health, energy and power predicament, is at the heart of Africa's food security. The African Development Bank estimates the investment required to meet Africa's water needs at $50 billion to $54 billion per year for each of the next 20 years. Water scarcity also accounts for one of the most significant constraints to women's productivity, with women in sub-Saharan Africa spending over 40 billion hours a year collecting water, the equivalent of a year's worth of labour by the entire workforce of France. The Darfur International Conference on Water for Sustainable Peace was held in Khartoum on 27 and 28 June 2011 to underline the importance of water not only for sustainable peace but also for development in Darfur and involved local communities in the planning and implementation phases of 65 water projects for the three Darfur States.

4. Energy security

74. Africa is the lowest consumer of energy, with 500 million people living without electricity in sub-Saharan Africa, where 23 of the 48 countries are vulnerable to energy shocks. Extreme poverty and the lack of access to other fuels means that 80 per cent of the population relies on biomass (e.g., wood and vegetation). This in turn promotes the removal of vegetation and negative changes to ecosystems, in turn possibly contributing to displacement. The combination of unsustainable harvesting of forests, increased soil degradation and supply disruption poses a threat to sustainable development and human security. At one level, the move towards "energy autarky" by some States in order to protect energy supplies has the potential to lead to inter-State disputes. Another concern is the impact on development from unreliable and unaffordable electricity. Declining river flows due to the impacts of climate change may lead to declining hydropower production, which in turn will have an impact on the financial viability and the sustainability of energy investments. 2012 is the International Year for Sustainable Energy for All. The year must bring a global clean energy revolution, which is essential for minimizing climate risks, reducing poverty and improving global health, empowering women and meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

5. Governance of natural resources

75. The appropriate political, economic and corporate governance of natural resources is critical to promoting their responsible management and requires that all actors, from governments to international companies to local communities, develop policies that promote a positive impact on national and local economies.

76. We need to support African-led processes of developing minimum standards for natural resource governance based on an informed understanding of the linkages among the environment, conflict, development and a broader peacebuilding agenda. We must sustain efforts aimed at enhancing the capacity of governments and civil society for natural resource management, including the strengthening of monitoring and enforcement mechanisms; the involvement of the private sector as a partner in post-conflict reconstruction and development activities; and the strengthening of existing regulatory mechanisms, including the Extractive Industries Transparency

Initiative, or the Kimberly Process. NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism provide a platform in which African countries can effectively tackle natural resource management in evaluating governance. It is equally critical to address issues related to corruption, so often linked with the exploitation of natural resources. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime already provides assistance aimed at strengthening anti-corruption authorities and at developing national policies against corruption, in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, FAO, IFAD and the World Bank are developing principles for responsible agricultural investment.

77. The abundance of minerals, fuel or land does not need to determine either the political or the economic trajectory of African countries. Where the illegal exploitation or corrupt and inequitable management of natural resources has been central to conflict dynamics, the early restoration of transparent and accountable resource governance in the post-conflict period is crucial. The UNEP "conflicts and disasters" programme serves as an example of this. The programme provides capacity-building for better governance of natural resources and best practices in environmental management and ensuring that natural resources support development and peacebuilding priorities. Capacity should also be provided to map out the resources and provide the necessary skills to negotiate contracts and agreements on the exploitation of natural resources.

6. The United Nations and the illegal exploitation of natural resources

78. Africa's progress needs to be measured in tangible improvements to peoples' lives. Whenever the United Nations is called upon to assist, it needs to effectively target the needs of local communities to improve the well-being and security of individuals in the context of management of natural resources. Yet, mainstreaming by the United Nations of natural resource analysis and environmental needs in the planning of conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance and early recovery operations provides room for improvement.

79. Some efforts have been undertaken. Historically, the Security Council has taken resolute measures to address the issue of the illegal exploitation of natural resources. It has imposed embargoes on all round logs and timber products from Liberia, an embargo on all rough diamonds from Angola, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, and an embargo on the sale or supply of oil to Angola and Sierra Leone. The Council also mandated the United Nations Mission in Liberia to assist the transitional government in restoring proper administration of natural resources and established a group of experts to propose measures to prevent the illegal exploitation of natural resources financing armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The issue has also featured in the agenda of other intergovernmental bodies, such as the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

80. The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime, launched in November 2010, is working to adopt a comprehensive and collaborative approach to help prevent the illegal exploitation of natural resources, including endangered species and forest crime. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is currently undertaking a threat analysis in Central Africa which includes organized crime and illicit trafficking of natural resources which will serve as a tool for a

better informed policymaking. Since June 2009, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support have a dedicated environmental policy for United Nations field missions that covers key areas, such as waste, energy, water, and management of cultural and historical resources.

81. The United Nations inter-agency framework team for preventive action, hosted by the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), manages a joint United Nations-European Union programme that brings together the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Political Affairs, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme to support countries in improving natural resource management for conflict prevention and peacebuilding and to manage and mitigate tensions over environmental issues. The partnership enhances policy development and programme coordination between key actors at Headquarters and the field level and develops a series of guidance notes, training manuals and an online self-paced learning tool.

82. The United Nations and African bodies should consider the issue of the illicit exploitation of natural resources from a regional approach, in addition to a national perspective, to address the regional dimensions of the problem, including issues such as the link with illicit trade in arms, mercenaries or drug trafficking. The West African Initiative, launched by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Office for West Africa, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Interpol to support implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Regional Action Plan to address drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa (2008-2011), provides a good example of cooperation in this area.

7. Policy proposals and recommendations

83. We need to adapt our policy and response mechanisms to effectively respond to a new generation of multi faceted crises that may include elements related to the exploitation of natural resources and environmental change. For this, we need clear and concise policy guidelines, tools, information-sharing mechanisms and expertise within the organization. United Nations missions and country teams need to assist countries and communities to integrate natural resource and environmental considerations into their post-conflict and development plans, especially at the regional level. Strengthening the institutional architecture and regional cooperation and enhancing the interplay with the representatives of the private and financial sectors will go a long way to ensure success in commonly agreed strategies.

84. In cooperation with the African Union, regional economic communities, governments, donors, civil society and local communities, the United Nations should aim at promoting an Africa-led process in transforming natural resource wealth from a peace liability to a peace asset in conflict and post-conflict situations.

85. **I call on the United Nations system to mainstream analysis of natural resource management issues, including land reform, water management and environmental challenges, within peacekeeping, peacebuilding and humanitarian assessments.**

86. **I will consider the possibility of deploying experts in natural resource management in peacekeeping operations.**

87. **I call on United Nations country teams and peacebuilding support offices to include in national poverty reduction strategies programmes to promote responsible, equitable, gender-responsive and economically productive resource management in conflict and post-conflict countries in Africa.**

88. **Where national resources form an important national asset, the United Nations should support a national dialogue on the role of natural resources revenues in the society with a view to defining an inclusive growth and development strategy and promoting a more accountable and transparent use of natural resources, including through the enforcement of effective anti-corruption policies. This should be done in coordination with community-based institutions, regional economic communities and the African Union-NEPAD.**

89. **I call on international partners and the private sector to uphold corporate responsibility codes and comply with existing regulatory mechanisms to ensure that natural resource revenues are not diverted into activities that exacerbate conflict.**

90. **I call on all partners to consider the effective use of indigenous and women's knowledge and practices in natural resources management and in mitigation of and adaptation to the impact of climate change, including local mediation mechanisms for land use, such as councils of elders and local peace councils.**

91. **I call on the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and other partners to assist in building the capacity of existing river basin institutions, such as the Nile River Basin Initiative and Mano River Union secretariat, and the Nubian aquifer system countries so that they are more responsive to the challenges of climate change and conflict in line with existing frameworks for the African Union, the regional economic communities and other partnerships and programmes, such as the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union.**